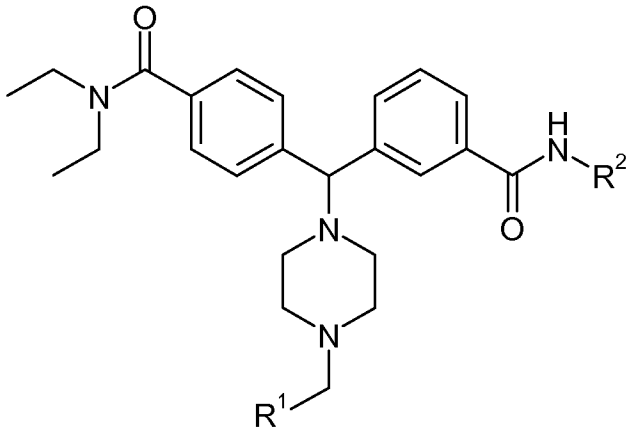
Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listing(s) of claims:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A compound of formula I, pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof, or mixtures thereof:



I

wherein

R^1 is C_{5-14}aryl ~~or C_{3-20} heteroaryl~~, five-membered ring heteroaryl, six-membered ring heteroaryl, or N-oxido-pyridyl, wherein said C_{5-14}aryl, ~~and~~ five-membered ring heteroaryl, and six-membered ring heteroaryl are each independently and optionally substituted with one or more groups selected from C_{1-6}alkyl, halogenated C_{1-6}alkyl, $-NO_2$, $-CF_3$, C_{1-6} alkoxy, chloro, fluoro, bromo, and iodo ~~C_{1-6}hydrocarbon, $-NO_2$, -OR, -Cl, -Br, -I, -F, $-CF_3$, -C(=O)R, -C(=O)OH, $-NH_2$, -SH, -NHR, $-NR_2$, -SR, $-SO_3H$, $-SO_2R$, -S(=O)R, -CN, -OH, -C(=O)OR, $-C(=O)NR_2$, -NRC(=O)R, oxo (=O), imino (=NR), thio (=S), and oximino (=N-OR), wherein each R is a C_{1-6}hydrocarbyl~~; and

R^2 is hydrogen~~,~~ or C_{1-12}alkyl~~, C_{6-12}aryl, or C_{2-12}heterocyclyl, wherein said alkyl, aryl, and heterocyclyl are each independently and optionally substituted with one or more groups selected from C_{1-6}hydrocarbon, $-NO_2$, -OR, -Cl, -Br, -I, -F, $-CF_3$, -C(=O)R, -C(=O)OH, $-NH_2$, -SH, -NHR, $-NR_2$, -SR, $-SO_3H$, $-SO_2R$, -S(=O)R, -CN, -OH, -C(=O)OR, $-C(=O)NR_2$, -NRC(=O)R, oxo (=O), imino (=NR), thio (=S), and oximino (=N-OR), wherein each R is a C_{1-6}hydrocarbyl~~.

2. (Original) A compound according to claim 1,

wherein R^1 is selected from phenyl; pyridyl; thienyl; furyl; imidazolyl; triazolyl; pyrrolyl; thiazolyl; and N-oxido-pyridyl, optionally substituted with one or more groups selected from C_{1-6}alkyl, halogenated C_{1-6}alkyl, $-NO_2$, $-CF_3$, C_{1-6} alkoxy, chloro, fluoro, bromo, and iodo; and

R^2 is hydrogen or methyl.

3. (Original) A compound according to claim 1,
wherein R^1 is selected from phenyl; pyridyl; thienyl; furyl; imidazolyl; pyrrolyl; and thiazolyl, optionally substituted with one or more groups selected from C_{1-6}alkyl, halogenated C_{1-6}alkyl, $-NO_2$, $-CF_3$, C_{1-6} alkoxy, chloro, fluoro, bromo, and iodo; and

R^2 is hydrogen or methyl.

4. (Original) A compound according to claim 1,
wherein R^1 is selected from phenyl; pyridyl; thienyl; furyl; imidazolyl; pyrrolyl; and thiazolyl; and

R^2 is hydrogen or methyl.

5. (currently amended) A compound according to claim 1, wherein the compound is ~~selected from~~:

3-[(4-[(diethylamino)carbonyl]phenyl)(4-benzyl-piperazin-1-yl)methyl]benzamide;

3-{(4-[(diethylamino)carbonyl]phenyl)[4-(2-furylmethyl)-piperazin-1-yl]methyl}benzamide; or

3-[[4-[(diethylamino)carbonyl]phenyl][4-(phenylmethyl)-1-piperazinyl]methyl]-N-methyl-benzamide; or enantiomers thereof; ~~and~~ or pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof; or mixtures thereof.

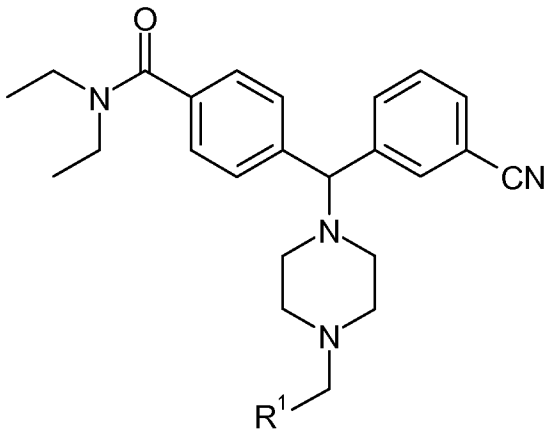
6-7. (Cancelled)

8. (previously presented) A pharmaceutical composition comprising a compound according to claim 1 and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

9. (previously presented) A method for the therapy of pain in a warm-blooded animal, comprising administering to said animal in need of such therapy a therapeutically effective amount of a compound according to claim 1.

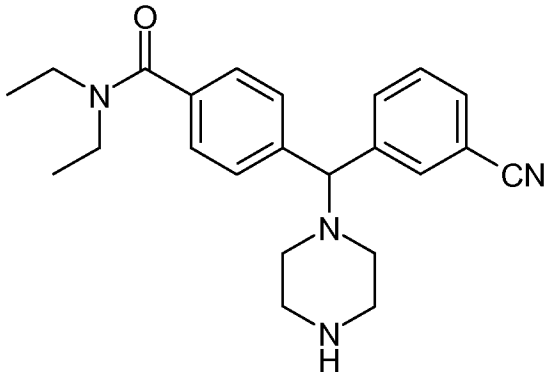
10. (cancelled)

11. (currently amended) A process for preparing a compound of formula II,



II

comprising ~~of the step of~~ reacting a compound of formula III:



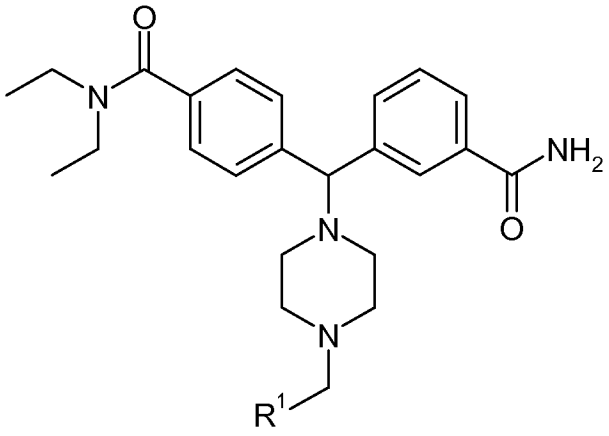
III

with R^1-CHO to form the compound of formula II

wherein

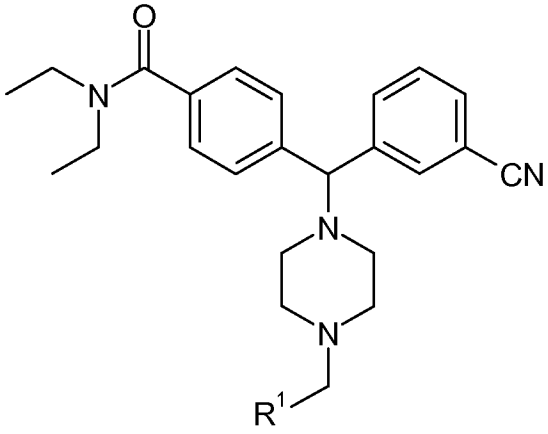
R^1 is C_{5-14}aryl ~~or C_{3-20} heteroaryl~~, five-membered ring heteroaryl, six-membered ring heteroaryl, or N-oxido-pyridyl, wherein said C_{5-14}aryl, ~~and~~ five-membered ring heteroaryl, and six-membered ring heteroaryl are each independently and optionally substituted with one or more groups selected from C_{1-6}alkyl, halogenated C_{1-6}alkyl, $-NO_2$, $-CF_3$, C_{1-6} alkoxy, chloro, fluoro, bromo, and iodo ~~C_{1-6}hydrocarbon, $-NO_2$, -OR, -Cl, -Br, -I, -F, $-CF_3$, -C(=O)R, -C(=O)OH, $-NH_2$, -SH, -NHR, $-NR_2$, -SR, $-SO_3H$, $-SO_2R$, -S(=O)R, -CN, -OH, -C(=O)OR, $-C(=O)NR_2$, -NRC(=O)R, oxo (=O), imino (=NR), thio (=S), and oximino (=N-OR), wherein each R is a C_{1-6}hydrocarbyl~~.

12. (currently amended) A process for preparing a compound of formula IV,



IV

comprising: reacting a compound of formula II,



II

with an akali metal hydroxide in non-aqueous solvent to form the compound of formula IV: wherein

R^1 is C_{5-14}aryl ~~or C_{3-20} heteroaryl~~, five-membered ring heteroaryl, six-membered ring heteroaryl, or N-oxido-pyridyl, wherein said C_{5-14}aryl, ~~and~~ five-membered ring heteroaryl, and six-membered ring heteroaryl are each independently and optionally substituted with one or more groups selected from C_{1-6}alkyl, halogenated C_{1-6}alkyl, $-NO_2$, $-CF_3$, C_{1-6} alkoxy, chloro, fluoro, bromo, and iodo ~~C_{1-6}hydrocarbon, $-NO_2$, -OR, -Cl, -Br, -I, -F, $-CF_3$, -C(=O)R, -C(=O)OH, $-NH_2$, -SH, -NHR, $-NR_2$, -SR, $-SO_3H$, $-SO_2R$, -S(=O)R, -CN, -OH, -C(=O)OR, $-C(=O)NR_2$, -NRC(=O)R, oxo (=O), imino (=NR), thio (=S), and oximino (=N-OR), wherein each R is a C_{1-6}hydrocarbyl~~.